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TWO SENTENCED IN CHURCH FRAUD - LOCAL CHURCH IS VICTIMIZED

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney John K. Vincent announced today that MARK JACKSON, age 41, and LISA JACKSON, age 43, were sentenced in United States District Court by the Hon. Edward J. Garcia. The JACKSONS are both from the Atlanta, Georgia area, but also lived in Nashville and most recently Palm Beach, Florida. MARK JACKSON and LISA JACKSON were sentenced to 33 months and 21 months in prison, respectively, with a 3-year term of supervised release. The Court further ordered that MARK JACKSON pay a \$60,000 fine, and that LISA JACKSON pay a \$40,000 fine. The defendants also must make restitution to the victims in the amount of \$1,558,750.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Robin R. Taylor, who prosecuted the case, the sentence follows the JACKSONS' admission and guilty pleas to defrauding investors out of at least \$1.5 million. The victims of the fraudulent scheme include a Sacramento church, its pastor, and members of its congregation. The defendants participated in a scheme which used their company, Covenant Broadcasting Network, or "CBN", based in Nashville, Tennessee, to lure investors with the promise of television air time, as well as stock certificates which would yield a high rate of return on investments. MARK JACKSON represented that he was the Chief Executive Officer, and that LISA JACKSON

was the President of CBN. The JACKSONS' victims included members of Christian churches including Calvary Christian Center Church in Sacramento and Cool Springs Church in Brentwood, TN. The victims never received any money from their investments, and the JACKSONS broke off communication.

The defendants previously admitted in court that between July 1998, and March 1999, they devised a scheme to defraud to obtain money in the amount of approximately \$1.5 million, by making false misrepresentations to others, including the congregation of Calvary Christian Center Church, located at 2665 Del Paso Blvd. in Del Paso Heights that: CBN would be broadcasting nationally by January 1999; CBN was a profitable company; and that CBN did not need the investors' money. The defendants admitted in court that they were not taking the appropriate steps to ensure that CBN would be broadcasting nationally by January 1999, and the defendants needed the investors' money to maintain CBN's daily operations.

After obtaining a \$700,000 pledge from an investor and churchgoer in Tennessee, MARK JACKSON secured an introduction to the pastor of Calvary Christian Center Church, in Sacramento. In November of 1998, the JACKSONS came to Sacramento and met with the congregation of Calvary Church, where they secured another \$625,000 in stock purchases. The investors did not get stock certificates, but instead got letters from the JACKSONS falsely assuring them that the stock was on the way. The JACKSONS secured additional investors in Florida. Although the victims repeatedly attempted to contact the JACKSONS about their investments, their calls and letters went unanswered.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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